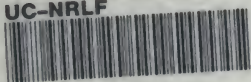


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MARCH, 1907
Vol. XIV. No. 7

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The Conflict of the Catholic Church with the French Republic

WILLIAM M. SALTER

The Russian Situation

ALEXIS ALADIN and NICHOLAS TCHAYKOVSKY

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THE CONFLICT OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH WITH THE FRENCH REPUBLIC*

THE bitterness of language about the present religious and political crisis in France is very great. On the one side we hear of "Papal aggression" and of the "rebellion" of the Catholic Church. On the other side the Republic is charged with "outrageous thefts," with "falsehood, duplicity and hypocrisy," with "brutal vindictiveness;" the government is spoken of as persecuting, as filled with infidel hatred against the Church and Christianity, as oppressing and enslaving the Church and bent on its destruction. It must be confessed that of the two, the disciples of the Republic show the better temper, though since the Church is the aggrieved party the greater violence of speech may be excused on its side—it having always to be borne in mind that Catholics are men as well as Christians. I have no wish to enter into the polemics of the case, but I have been exceedingly interested in trying to get a clear idea of the situation and to form some judgment as to the real merits of the controversy, and if there are those here who have been puzzled as I have been by what they have read in the newspapers, possibly my words may be of help to them.

First, let me make a general observation. I see no abstract reason why there should not be a union of Church and State. If people were substantially of one mind in religion, I see no reason why they should not make their

*An address before the Society for Ethical Culture of Chicago, in Steinway Hall, January 6, 1907.

priests or pastors public functionaries and support them out of the public funds as well as by private and voluntary contributions. So our New England forefathers did for a time, so Greece and Rome and practically all ancient communities did, so almost all modern European states have done—down at least to quite recent times. The idea of religion as a private matter, and of its support as something to be left to individual enterprise, is a new idea. It has arisen, of course, because men have come to be divided in religion, because with the growth of science and independent habits of thought men are now of many minds—and no one wishes to be forced to contribute to the support of what he does not believe in. If there were only two or three great divisions of religious sentiment, the State might still continue its traditional policy, dividing its support among the two or three claimants—as has been done in Germany and France, where Protestants as well as Catholics and perhaps Jews and Mohammedans have received support from the public funds proportionally to their numbers. But where the population becomes still more divided, where variations multiply, where often each man has his own religion, and some have none at all—there the old basis for a union of Church and State practically breaks down entirely, and the simplest way, the only way, comes to be to let the various religious adherents support each his own church, and if there are those who have no religion, to support none. This is the theory at which we have arrived in this country—indeed to us Americans it is so obvious that the statement of it sounds the merest commonplace, and we can hardly realize that it is scarcely more than a century or two old. In England still it is not recognized; it is not in Germany or Italy, not to say Holy Russia—I am not positive, but I think the only country that recognizes it in this Western

hemisphere is the United States; the new republic of Brazil, where separation of Church and State is sometimes spoken of as having taken place, still pays the priests of the Catholic Church, and in certain sections Protestant pastors.

Now, France down to the time of the great Revolution was, after Spain and Italy, one of the most Catholic countries in Europe; she was the "eldest daughter of the Church;" Protestantism never got a real footing there. But since the Revolution, and partly on account of the great thinkers and agitators whom we connect with the Revolution, Rousseau, Voltaire, Diderot, Condorcet and the rest, the old Catholic faith has been in a gradual and constant process of disintegration in the minds of the people. A prominent Italian Catholic ¹ admits that Catholics are now in the minority in France—and he concedes the inevitable conclusion that "a minority can never form the religion of the State in accordance with principles of modern parliamentary government." An English Catholic speaks of "the appalling extent to which the church has lost its hold on the French people;" he says that there are "large districts of France," in which "the practice of religion has almost ceased," and admits that where it continues, it is to a large extent "merely an external form." ²

But perhaps the most important witness is a French abbé, writing in the October number of the *American Catholic Quarterly Review* (1906); his story has almost a pathetic interest, and recalls similar impressions which I received in Italy. He says the country churches are becoming more and more empty, that many a priest has a congregation of five or six old crones to listen to his

¹ Romolo Murri in *Rassegna Nazionale*, quoted in *Literary Digest*, 24 Nov. 1906, p. 760.

² Robert Dell, *Fortnightly Review*, Oct. 1906, p. 615.

service on Sundays. In many cases, he remarks, the religious practices are mere formalities, rites that have to be performed because they are traditional. Atheists, he says, are married in church to please the bride; some of the most violent antagonists of Catholicism have been carried before the altar after their death; even the last sacraments are often received because it looks so much better for the family—"rites, not faith," he adds with a sigh. Becoming more specific, he says that in nearly all the industrial towns not a tenth of the population goes to church, and if we considered only the quarters inhabited by working people, the proportion would be still smaller; that there are rural districts in which the case is quite as bad, that the non-religious area is spreading, that amongst the workmen of the towns and the peasants in all the country around Paris there is a general distrust and hatred of the priest, that while there are other regions where the priest is still respected and many practice religion, though abstainers are as numerous, and still other parts of France like Brittany where nearly all are good Catholics, on the whole the real Catholics are certainly a minority amongst the men, and perhaps among the women, too. He significantly remarks that in the German *Kulturkampf* (waged under Bismarck), the priests of that country had a great advantage—they had their population at their back. He refers to the view that the Freemasons are responsible for the troubles in France, and calls it time to abandon the fiction of 36,000,000 Catholics oppressed by 26,000 Freemasons—and says roundly, "we are in fact, a minority oppressed by a majority." It would, of course, be foolish to speak of these peasants and working people on whom Catholicism has lost its hold as disciples of Voltaire and Rousseau, and yet an influence is in the air, coming more or less from men like these,

that is responsible for their present mental condition; they vaguely know too that the upper educated class now are largely unbelievers—the abbé I have quoted mournfully says that the cultivated section, and especially the masculine intellect, of the nation for the greater part escapes the influence of the Church. But whatever the causes, the broad fact remains: “the eldest daughter of the Church” is no longer really a Catholic country—real, or as the abbé calls them, “practical” Catholics are now a minority; and the defection is not simply among the so-called intellectual class, it reaches down among the mass of the common people.

In circumstances like these the old principle of a union of Church and State breaks down by the weight of its own absurdity. It is absurd and unjust to support out of the public funds what a large number, not to say a majority, really do not believe in—to take one man’s money and make it support another man’s faith. This is the broad general ground of principle underlying efforts like that which the French Republic is now making to separate Church and State—it is what makes such efforts simply inevitable in time, the circumstances being given. Separation or disestablishment is inevitable sooner or later in England, in Germany, even in Italy and Austria and Spain; wherever modern intellectual tendencies get under way, a disintegration of the ancient faith comes, and when this comes, the public support of Catholicism or any specific church becomes an anachronism. In Spain it looks as if a movement similar to that in France might start in the near future.³

Accordingly a separation law has been passed in France. Undoubtedly the date of the law was determined by spe-

³ Since writing the above there has been a change of ministries and a political reaction; but it is likely to be only temporary.

cial events. The Pope a while ago refused to appoint the Bishops nominated by the French Government, and appointed others without consulting the government, thus violating the Concordat that has been in effect since Napoleon's time. This was naturally irritating; and President Loubet, when paying a visit to the King of Italy in Rome, did not call on the Pope. At this the Pope sent a protest to the governments of Europe—a proceeding which excited such resentment in France that the Republic withdrew its representation at the Vatican. If all this had not happened the date of the Separation Law might not have been December, 1905, but it would only have been postponed. Another thing: the Catholic Church, or rather the hierarchy, has not been friendly to the Republic from the start. Like other powers that had special privileges, it has clung tenaciously to the old order. It joined with the king and the nobles against the people in their struggle for political rights in the great Revolution of 1789. It has made a part of the monarchical party ever since. It is said (perhaps with exaggeration), that three times it has come near to overthrowing the Republic, under McMahan, with Boulanger, and with the army against Dreyfus. The Republic has gradually established a system of public schools; the church has opposed them—having been so long granted a monopoly of education, it supposed it had a right to it. Moreover, the government found that the priests and monks were teaching the children unrepugnant doctrines and training them to be monarchists. Indeed, an eminent American Archbishop ⁴ has frankly said, "Monarchical ideas and plottings have done dreadful injury to the Church in France." All this has brought needless bitterness into the present struggle, it

⁴ Archbishop Ireland, Cf. Bodley, quoted in *Springfield* (Weekly) *Republican*, 20 Dec. 1906.

has made friends of the government say some violent and foolish things; but if the church, or rather hierarchy, had not been reactionary and partisan, if it had accepted the new order as Leo XIII advised it to do, separation would have been inevitable all the same, in view of the general circumstances to which I have before alluded, though heart-burnings might have been less. The trouble is laid by an Archbishop⁵ at the door of a few demagogues and agitators who have a hold on the republic—it is a surprisingly superficial statement. If agitators ever, in any kind of a conflict or crisis, take the helm, it is because sober men have not done their duty; and in this case it is the sober rank and file of the Republic that have done the work—the extremists would have gone further, but were not allowed to have their way.

The separation, decreed a year ago in December, was to be as easy for the Church as possible, and yet be separation. The \$8,000,000 a year hitherto appropriated from the public treasury to pay the salaries of the clergy was, of course, to stop; but a system of pensions for priests now in service was provided, varying according to their age and length of service, and the church buildings were to be transferred to associations made up of their respective parishioners. There was to be no violence, no confiscation—public worship was to go on just as it had been going, with the exception that after a certain period, the support of it was to come entirely from the worshippers themselves. As this point is not clear to all minds, and as the most unreasoning and violent language is used by some Catholics in relation to the Separation Law, it may be well to make a detailed statement.

(1) This is a general disestablishment that France is putting into effect. It applies to the Lutheran, Reformed

⁵ Archbishop Ireland.

or Calvinist, and Jewish religions as well—even to the Mohammedan, as I understand it, in Algiers. All have been supported in a measure by the State, and the support of all alike is to be discontinued. There is no discrimination against Catholics.

(2) There is a general law of associations in France. It provides that before an association can acquire real property and a corporate legal personality, capable of suing or being sued, it must make a declaration in a form provided by the law. This declaration must state the title and objects of the association, the address of its officers and so on. By making a declaration the association is *ipso facto* legally constituted.

(3) The Separation Law simply applies this general law to religious associations. It calls for the organization of the worshippers in any religion, or rather in any specific church or parish, into an *association cultuelle* (public worship association)—to which, or its officers, the church property, *i. e.*, the church building itself with its furniture, ornaments and relics, and the parsonage, may be transferred. Such associations are common among Protestant churches in our country—their officers are called trustees, or vestrymen. Similar associations hold Catholic church property in Germany, or at least, Prussia. Indeed it would appear that in France the Catholic church buildings in the past have not been really the property of the bishop as is commonly supposed, but of what are called “conseils de fabrique,” bodies of laymen with the parish priest as chairman, half of whom were nominated by the government, the mayor being an *ex officio* member.

(4) The Protestant and Jewish religions have made no objection to the law; the Catholic Church has made

strenuous objection—why? An American Archbishop⁶ has said it is as if the legislature of New York were to enact laws compelling the trustees of Trinity Church corporation, under the penalty of confiscation, to give its consent to the alienation of all its vast property to other uses than those for which it was intended and to transfer its administration and control to people who might either belong to rival denominations or even profess atheism. This is a most unaccountable misrepresentation. The law provides that the property of each church (or religion) shall go only to that church. Clauses IV, VIII and XIII make it impossible for the Roman Catholic cathedrals and churches to be assigned to any but a Catholic public worship association, just as they require that Protestant edifices and Jewish synagogues shall be assigned only to those associations which represent their present holders. “The general rules of organization” of each religion are to be sacredly respected—and one of those rules, in the case of the Catholic church, every one knows, is the necessity of being in communion with the bishop of the diocese—thereby Catholicism differs from all forms of Protestant or independent religious organization; and M. Briand, the Minister of Public Instruction and Worship, has repeatedly stated that this rule will be the first consideration in deciding between rival associations claiming to be Catholic, in case there should be rival claimants in any particular case. From all that I have read I cannot discover a scintilla of evidence that the French government has any intention whatever of allowing old-time Catholic Churches to be used by Protestants or atheists, supposing that associations are formed as the law requires.

⁶ Archbishop Farley, as quoted in *Chicago Tribune*, 17 Dec. 1906.

(5) As matter of fact, the French bishops, while not liking separation, voted by a large majority, in formal assembly, to give the new law a trial. Some of the most eminent Catholic laity—men like Brunetière, A. Leroy-Beaulieu and de Vogué have urged this course. The Bishops drew up a plan of constitutions for Catholic public worship associations. These constitutions formally subjected the associations to the authority of the Pope and the bishop of the diocese; they required of all the members a formal profession of faith and of submission to the authority of the Pope and the Church, and a formal engagement that they would abstain from joining any secret society condemned by the church, and would conform to the laws of the Church as regards Baptism, First Communion, education of their children, the marriage of themselves and their children, religious burial, etc.; the parish priest, according to the plan, was an *ex officio* member; everyone who remained for a month under any ecclesiastical censure ceased to be a member—a provision that enabled the bishop to expel any member, and would make it impossible for the association to be captured by heretics or schismatics.⁷ Such was the model for the associations proposed by the French bishops. As an English Catholic writer has pointed out, a Catholic public worship association of this kind would be more under the control of the bishop than is the present “conseil de fabrique,” which may have members who are not Catholics at all. M. Briand has stated that the plan of the Bishops was in accordance with the Separation Law. Indeed, this Minister of Public Instruction and Worship, who is a Socialist and a statesman at the same time, points out that the scruples and misgivings of the Papacy are treated more sympathetically in this law than they were in Ger-

⁷ Robert Dell, *Fortnightly Review*, Oct. 1906, p. 610.

many—there the Chairman of the Public Worship Association must be a layman, in France he may be the parish priest.⁸

(6) For all this, however, the Pope has refused to allow French Catholics to conform to the Separation Laws. When the Pope learned of the plan of the Bishops I have just described, he is reported to have exclaimed, "They have voted against me—they have voted as Frenchmen."⁹ It was something like consternation that went through the Catholic population of France, when the Pope's Encyclical was published last August. Diligent search, says the *Literary Digest*, fails to discover in the leading political organs a single sentence in vindication of the Pope's attitude. Twenty-three of the most prominent Catholics in France united in an appeal to him to withdraw or modify the Encyclical. They urged that the great majority of laymen, clergymen and bishops were satisfied with the new law, and believed it could be obeyed without impairing the spiritual influence of the Church. In view of this it becomes tolerably plain that the opinion and will of the Catholic Church in France have been deliberately overborne by the Pope, and that a truer title for my address to-day would be "The Conflict of the Pope with the French Republic." The mystery is why the Pope should have acted as he has. I have been puzzled and perplexed myself, but I think I have at last the clue. M. Briand says, "The French government does not find itself confronted by a revolt of the Catholic conscience, but by an enterprise which is purely political." The first part of the statement is palpably true; the second is open to doubt. There are reasons enough for suspecting political designs behind ecclesiastical actions against the

⁸ The (London) *Speaker*, 18 Aug. 1906.

⁹ *The Nation*, 13 Sept. 1906.

Republic, but after some study and searching I am of the opinion that in this case a subtler and deeper motive is at work. Some one has said, "The Church is Episcopal; the law tries to make it congregational." The language is epigrammatic and perhaps needs explanation to an un-ecclesiastical audience; but I suspect it goes to the heart of the matter. The theory of the Pope is that the property of the Catholic Church belongs to the Roman Pontiff and the Bishops. It is a somewhat startling proposition, but it is deliberately advanced by Pius X. The Church does not own its property, but the head (or heads) of the church—the hierarchy. This is the real reason why the Pope cannot consent to the Public Worship Associations provided for by the French law, even as the plan was drawn up for them by the French Bishops. No matter how strictly and absolutely Roman Catholic the Associations, it would be to them that the Government would transfer the property, not to the Pope or Bishops. The Pope wants his (*i. e.*, the hierarchy's) right recognized; he demands (to quote his own language), "that the immutable right of the Roman Pontiff and of the Bishops, and their authority over the necessary property of the Church, particularly over the sacred edifices" shall be established by law. In other words, he wants a legal recognition of his peculiar theory of the ownership of Catholic property. It is the monarchical theory, the absolutist theory, as opposed to a democratic theory. So far as its property is concerned, he might rewrite a famous French king's motto, and say "L'église—c'est moi," "the church, it is I." It is in accordance with the new claims of Papal infallibility, another step in the direction of ecclesiastical centralization—but it is hardly a theory which the French Republic is likely to recognize.¹⁰

¹⁰ It is a curious fact, however, that in the United States all

An English writer, to whom I am much indebted in this address, says that from the charges made one would suppose that the churches in France had hitherto been entirely in the hands of the ecclesiastical authorities and that now the State was incontinently seizing upon them, while the fact is that in the whole history of France the churches have never been the property of the bishops, still less of the Pope, any more than they were in England or in any other Catholic country in the Middle Ages.¹¹ He calls the view of the Pope I have described "the modern Ultramontane notion," and says that it has never been accepted by the French nation, either in theory or practice. And yet here the Pope stands. A semi-official note was published in Rome only the 20th December last saying, "The Holy See will not desist from its present attitude until a bill is presented containing as a minimum to be tolerated an acknowledgment of the essential rights of the Church, beginning with the Catholic hierarchy, which is the divine foundation of the organization of the Church."¹² In an Encyclical of February, 1906, the Pope said, "That the state must be separated from the Church is a thesis absolutely false, a most pernicious error." He even described it as a "great injustice to God." And he recently exclaimed, "Nothing shall arrest our course, neither persecutions nor martyrdom, in

Catholic property is held in the Bishop's name. But it must be remembered that our country has never had to face France's problem, for there has never been a union of Church and State, and virtual public ownership of church property, in the first place (save in some New England villages in colonial days). If there had been a Catholic establishment here it would be interesting to know if, in changing to the present system, our Government would have transferred the property to Bishops, instead of to the congregations and their Trustees.

¹¹ Robert Dell, *Fortnightly Review*, Oct. 1906, pp. 607-608.

¹² Reprinted in *Boston Pilot*, 29 Dec. 1906.

our work of protecting religion. Our cause is the cause of God." ¹³

To my mind, this position of the Pope, if he does not recede from it, will be little less than epoch-making. The claim may be old, but it has never been so sharply made before. The Pope is really asking more from France than he had under the Concordat, now abolished. He is asking more than Pius IX asked of Prussia in the war with Bismarck—at least more than he got; for thirty years now church property there has been in the hands of councils who are democratically elected by all the Catholics of each parish.¹⁴ He is not content to have Church property Catholic, he wants it Papal, Hierarchical—he even prefers to have the French Catholics lose their property than have it owned by the Public Worship Associations. It is an immense claim, a revolutionary one—and it is an immense responsibility he has taken on himself in making it at this critical moment.

I have spoken of his position as possibly epoch-making. But there are epochs in the decline of a people or religion as well as in its rise or advancement: and this position, if persisted in, will mark an epoch in the decline of the Catholic Church in France—yes, wherever in the world there are democratic tendencies and the people at all think. It will be written down that the present Pope cared more for a theory of ecclesiastical property than he did for the welfare of the Church, for the continuity of public worship, for the peaceful enjoyment by Catholics of their customary privileges—for a theory too, that involved distrust of his faithful subjects. It is as if a Protestant pastor should say, I cannot trust my parish or congregation, and all its property I must own in my own

¹³ *Literary Digest*, 22 Dec. 1906.

¹⁴ So Robert Dell, *Fortnightly Review*, Oct. 1906, p. 611.

name. French Catholics temporarily submit, the Bishops submit—it is a terrible thing for those who still live under the shadow of the Middle Ages to be put under the ban by the Pope; American Catholics, too, submit—though for some who have really breathed the American spirit it must be hard. But when the excitement of the crisis is over, and a period of reflection sets in, I believe that thoughtful Catholics will think less of the pretensions of the Papacy than ever before, that defections from the Church will increase, that men will feel with new distinctness that the Church as Pius X conceives it is an anachronism in the modern world. As it is, the papers tell us of profound apathy in Paris when the Separation Law went into effect (on December 11th last); the attendance in the churches at mass was indeed larger than for years, but it was mostly women; nowhere were the churches crowded—even at Notre Dame cathedral, where solemn high mass was celebrated, the edifice was only half filled.¹⁵

Is it necessary still to say a word about “confiscation”? Uninformed or else unscrupulous Catholics speak of the Separation Law as a “great National theft.” One of our American archbishops quotes significantly the commandment, “Thou shalt not steal” as applying to governments as well as individuals. But there is another command equally imperative, “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor”—and it is false witness to say that the French Government has planned anything like confiscation. It planned a law in accordance with which Catholic parishes might now be having all the property they ever had. This law (or some similar law) was necessary, because hitherto there had been a union of State and Church—and

¹⁵ Chicago *Record-Herald*, 12 Dec. 1906.

churches not having been private but public institutions and the State being always the ultimate judge of property rights, it was incumbent on the State when the churches became private to say on what terms they could have the property they had hitherto enjoyed. A new status required a new law. The Church (save in special cases) had no property rights against the State; the State was the real ultimate owner of what it possessed. The State accordingly arranged to transfer the property necessary to Catholic worship to the Public Worship Associations I have described.

But what if the associations were not formed, if the intentions of the State were frustrated? This is what has happened under the commands of Pius X. He forbade the formation of associations required by law. The result is embarrassment for the State as well as for the faithful. It has property on its hands which it cannot dispose of as it would. If then it cannot dispose of it in one way, it must in another. The only definite announcement that has been made is that property not claimed by the associations the law prescribes, will be assigned to charitable institutions. As matter of fact, the government has not done this as yet—it has been most lenient; it was to allow a year from the time the law went into effect for its terms to be complied with. According to the instructions of the ministry, no churches were to be closed—not a door or a window; and they have not been. There will be no persecution and no martyrdom, said M. Briand to an American newspaper correspondent, and he has stated officially that churches (so far, that is, as the Associations are not formed) will remain open as state and communal property, though the priests must look to the parishes for their salaries. Since, however, the Pope has positively forbidden the formation of the required associations, the situa-

tion has changed—and indeed the situation has become so entangled and confused in the last month or two that I cannot report upon it confidently as it exists at the present moment. Apparently the extension of a year's time in which to comply with the law has been withdrawn; church property not legally claimed will be converted to charitable uses soon; the allowances or pensions to priests who fail to carry out the law will be suppressed. This is the whole basis for the charges of confiscation and persecution so loosely thrown about. It is not really either, nor do I see how any discriminating or just-minded person could use this language. On the other hand, I do not see the propriety of speaking of the Church's attitude as "rebellion" or of the Pope as an "aggressor." The French government simply offered the Catholic Church an opportunity and the Church did not think best to accept it. We can only speak of what it has done as a great refusal—something in which it was quite within its rights. The Pope is a simple-minded and not broadly educated man, who stands by his ideas with a valor and firmness worthy of a better cause—he may be the tool of politicians, but he is not a politician himself—not perhaps enough of an one for the present crisis.

All the conflicts of the world are not between crime, theft and persecution on the one side and rebellion and wickedness on the other, or between things anywise comparable to these. Some conflicts are between opposing ideas, discordant necessities. Either side does what is inevitable from its own point of view.

Speaking broadly, looking at the matter from an elevation, where causes and consequences may be seen in a long train following one another, the present conflict in France is an episode in the gradual dissolution of ties that once held together Christendom, one incident in the

breaking up of the old religious faith that since Constantine has practically ruled the Western world. Causes far deeper than demagogues and agitators, far deeper than the present French Government or the republic, have operated to bring about this crisis. To prevent it, it would have been necessary to dam up and dry up the intellectual spirit of the modern world—the spirit that makes it modern. This is what Popes and Bishops have tried to do—they would have no science, no philosophy independent of the doctrines of the Church. In a great Catholic work published with the Pope's approval, it is said that "two great facts are opposed to the doctrine of Catholic truth: first, the coexistence of several religions in countries of equal civilization; and second, the proclamation of the independence of philosophical thought."¹⁶ It is the old idea of a world sovereignty, that will brook no rival; it is Hildebrand and the great medieval popes over again. But the rival has arisen and is sweeping the field. The old, proud sovereignty is weakening, dwindling—so that one must almost pity it. The present crisis shows a once Catholic nation now arrayed against it.

It is for lovers of light and reason not to indulge in inductive and abuse, (I speak now for free-thinkers like myself) to endeavor to keep the "tempered mood for higher life of states" of which Sophocles spoke, to try to see simply the truth, to allay passion not to increase it, and to speak even in a time like this, above all in such a critical time, in truth and in love.

¹⁶ Pechenard, "Le XIX siècle mouvement du monde," ch. "Les Luites de l'Eglise" quoted in *The Open Court*, Oct. 1905, p. 635.

THE RUSSIAN SITUATION

[The following addresses by Alexis Aladin, leader of the peasants, and member of the Group of Toil in the first Duma, and Nicholas Tchaykovsky, were given before the Philadelphia Ethical Society, Sunday, March 17th, just after a lecture by Mr. William M. Salter, of Chicago, on "The Russian Revolution." Mr. Salter's lecture will be printed in the April number of the *International Journal of Ethics*.]

ADDRESS BY ALEXIS ALADIN.

A FEW years ago it was quite true that the large masses of peasantry were practically inert and politically dead. But since the time when our Duma met one year ago, we have succeeded in taking hold of the masses of the population, about a hundred million of them, and in swinging them into one mighty movement. It is difficult even for a storm to put in motion the boundless sea, but when the water is put in motion you cannot stop it. I think we need not discuss any more the question about our readiness and determination to get what we want.

In the first Duma, one year ago, our party—the Party of Toil—representing the working classes and the peasantry, had 116 representatives out of 440. The Government claimed that we were not the true representatives of the people, and accordingly dissolved us. They meant to get a new Duma less radical than the first one. They tried to attain the same end even with the first one. The peasants, who were supposed to be uneducated and inert, had the privilege of sending from every province a spec-

ial delegate, and they sent them. But all of the special representatives of this uneducated, politically inert mass of peasantry were in the Party of Toil, the extreme left of the Duma.

To change the character of the Duma the Government put forth, during the six months of intermission between the first and the second Duma, the whole pressure which a body possessing 1,200,000 soldiers in time of peace, and 250,000 Cossack troops and the whole system of police, could put forth. They put it forth to the extent of striking off the electoral list 9,000,000 of peasant voters out of 30,000,000. They knew that most of us had no houses, and they did not hesitate to ask the Senate in its judicial capacity to give a new interpretation to the electoral law, and to strike off the list those of the peasant party who did not have a house, and they amounted to 9,000,000 men. A similar treatment was accorded to workingmen. At the time of the election to the first Duma every man of 21 years had a vote. But now it was limited to the working man who had a separate lodging, or as we say, a separate chimney, so that the male franchise was transformed into a chimney franchise. Thus we lost from twenty to forty per cent of the votes of the working classes, and nine million peasantry. We lost them, but we sent to the second Duma 192 men instead of 116. It is too late to speak about a small group of reformers trying to change the government of the country. The people are united, and will dictate terms to the autocracy and they must accept them or they will have to go.

I do not mean to say that we will accomplish everything by determination only—deep as it may be, and strong as it may be. Determination is not a machine-gun, and even with the whole body of the people pre-

pared, as it is now, to oppose the government—the latter has 1,200,000 soldiers to put against us, and we cannot fight them with empty hands. We have found by bitter experience that it is sometimes rather awkward to go with empty hands against a machine gun. We do not mind our losses. In one year, beginning with the seventh of October, 1905, and ending with the seventh of October, 1906, we lost over 16,000 men and women in wounded and killed. Fighting has been done in separate groups, in Sveaborg, in Caucasia, in Crimea, in Kief, in St. Petersburg, in Siberia. Soldiers fought side by side with us, but we were defeated. We do not mean to keep up this guerilla warfare, fighting here and there—if there is to be a battle let it be a battle royal. Mr. Dooley, says, “do not ask for rights, take them.” And we mean to take them, by all means which are effective. The people as a body are resolved to get at any cost what they consider the very minimum of their rights.

In this struggle going on in my country I think it is the plain duty of America to remain neutral. Americans have come to Russia and offered to give money to the government. We organized a general strike, and the railways all stopped, which entailed immense suffering to the people. By this strike we cleared these American gentlemen out of the country. Now I have come here to tell you Americans that you can, if you will, prevent the crime of lending money to the Russian government from being committed by America; and it is your duty to do it. But there is something more in our coming. There is another reason. We do not mind any amount of losses. When our boys are taken to prison and to Siberia we do not mind it. When our women are taken to prison and sent to Siberia we do not mind it. It is *à la guerre comme à la guerre*—by thousands they go, and perish and we do

not mind it. But when our girls are taken to prison and given over for a few hours of sport to the Cossacks, we do mind it. You would not stand anything like that in a war between two nations, and if there was a war between two sections of your people you would not stand it either. You would not have stood it in your Civil War. When the jailers begin to torture their prisoners, would you sit idle and tolerate it? I hope not a single American would say yes. Well, we too, mind it; it is not a fair play; it is blows below the belt. And in the name of your glorious past, and of your own struggle in the past, we ask you, the people of America to assure us fair play.

Not only on the plains of Italy, in the mountainous districts of the Balkan peninsula, on the streets of Paris, but even here, under your glorious Stars and Stripes, our men—men of my nation—Russians fought for freedom and liberty. If you cannot remember them, go to Independence Hall, and scan the names of the officers who fell in the cause of independence, and you will find the names of my countrymen. Can you look at these names, and not give us your help? If you have not forgotten your past, you will stand by the people which is fighting for its freedom.

ADDRESS BY NICHOLAS TCHAYKOVSKY.

It is our duty in this country to tell the last chapter of the revolutionary experiments. Invariably we hear authorities quoted on Russian events, who, in spite of all their sincerity and their good intentions, have missed the points in the last chapter. They tell of Russia of the last generation, but not of the Russia of to-day. The Russia of to-day is changed, even within the last five years, to such an extent that out of that inert, superstitious, ignorant mass of peasants and that unscrupulous and rapacious clique of autocratic bureaucrats there has come *a nation in revolution*. Only those who have lived with this nation, those who know its inner psychology, can fully understand what that means—a *nation in revolution*.

Up to the last century there were two movements in Russia, affecting various sections of the nation: the intellectuals and the masses; parties of intellectuals were working out different doctrines, different theories, and there were unconscious movements among the great mass of the population. When Alexander II introduced his measure for the abolition of serfdom, he said to the nobles, "If we do not give liberty to the serf from above he will take it from below." That was a wise warning and a statesman's voice. But though he introduced his reforms they were insufficient, and there have since arisen among the peasantry movements of spontaneous hatred of the autocratic *régime*, together with an ever-growing desire for liberty. The old persistent tendency of passive resistance on the part of the peasants—which has practically never ceased to exist during the last seven centuries—has served as a powerful traditional groundwork. Seven centuries ago we were invaded by Tartars, and our present autocratic government is a direct outcome of the

triple invasion of the Tartar State, of the Byzantine church and of the German bureaucracy.

Mr. Pobiedonostseff, who has been called the great prophet of autocracy, claims that the Russian people are quite different from any other civilized people; that they are guided not by reasonable considerations but by spontaneous impulses; that the government therefore must be based upon faith in divine inspiration being behind the power of the Czar, and that no other form of government but autocracy is possible for such a people. If some ground may have existed for this theory centuries ago, to our knowledge it does not exist any longer. There are no ideal rulers now, nor do the people believe blindly in the divine prerogatives of the Czar.

Originating in the Tartar invasion, and trained in Mongolian methods of oppression, the autocracy has been sustained by hard blows, the knout and the hoofs of the Cossack horses being the favorite weapons. It is on account of such methods as these that we are looking for sympathy from the other nations of the world—and because the struggle in which the Russian people is now engaged is the fight of civilization against a Tartar domination.

As to our church—which was brought from Byzantium—its pompous forms are foreign to the spirit of the people, and our clergy are absolutely unpopular with the masses. Our people are deeply religious, but they have their own religion and they are not ritualistic. Their religion has no more to do with the theatrical effects and ceremonial pomp of the Greek church than it has to do with the German bureaucracy, which was introduced by Peter the Great and his successors. Our Slavonic masses have always had their unwritten laws by which their public and family life are regulated; the communal possession of their lands, and managing their own affairs by a self-gov-

erning *mir* are essential parts of that unwritten law. The laws that have been forced upon them from above are absolutely foreign to them, and they have always passively resisted them. That element of traditional struggle is one of the forces now coming into play, which was overlooked even by such an unimpeachable authority as George Kennan. He saw the movement of the intellectuals, based upon Western science, and he understood it at once. But what was going on through the great masses, through the millions of our people—like the waves of a great ocean, from year to year—that he could not understand, because he never even saw it.

It was my privilege to be brought up among the peasants in Russia. Since the age of six I grew up with them, played with the children, knew their sorrows and their joys, and learned how to understand the peasant psychology. Their ideals and aspirations have nothing to do with the bureaucracy—that official scum which lies on the surface of our nation. That scum has become hardened into a crust, preventing the new tissue from growing underneath; but when the masses of our people arise in their might, it will be thrown off. But it is not an easy matter to throw it off. For thirty-five years we have tried to do so; but it is not an easy matter to move a nation of 140,000,000, to inspire them with faith in the possibility of another and higher form of national existence, to make them realize its loftiness, and to risk for it their lives and everything dear to them.

In 1848, when Emperor William, the grandfather of the present Emperor of Germany, saw that the masses of the working classes were really in earnest in their demands and prepared to die for their rights, he bowed before the corpses of Berlin workmen who were killed by the troops, and granted the people a Constitution. But

our "Tartar" government is incapable of these concessions. What has been done for the Constitution that was wrung from the government by the general strike of October, 1905? On the very next day, when the people were rejoicing at this concession, when the people—dressed in their best clothes—went out into the streets to voice their rejoicing, the government introduced in our public life a spectre of death. They were knouted by Cossacks, and shot by bands of ruffians supplied with rifles and revolvers of the governmental type. The portrait of the Czar and ikons were placed in the hands of those who were blessed in the cathedrals, and they were called to do the sacred work of "protecting His Majesty from his internal enemies." A procession of school children in Kursk was trampled down by the hoofs of the Cossack horses, slashed by their swords and whipped by their knouts. There were 500 corpses of the massacred in one day before the railway buildings at Tomsk. There were a series of such massacres all over Russia in 1905, when over 14,000 lost their lives and 18,000 were mutilated through these persecutions.

On the other hand, our nation has shown a remarkable constructive power. This is what happened in hundreds of places when the Constitution was announced: the former incompetent officials disappeared, and local committees of the best men to regulate the life of the community, were elected by the population. For over two months they lived quite happily, life and property being much better protected than under the autocracy. But after two months the autocratic government determined to crush down the new order by armed force, and they jailed, executed and banished the members of these committees by hundreds, and they installed again the ejected and banished officials who had hid themselves lest the

people should revenge upon them their former misdeeds. Such is the destructive function of the autocracy against the constructive power of the people.

It is not true that modern Russia consists only of corrupt officials and ignorant and silent masses. Owing to fifty years' work of Zemstvos we have quite a class of experienced and honest public servants—doctors, engineers, schoolmasters, agriculturists and others employed by Zemstvos—technically competent men who are absolutely sincere and earnest in their work of building up the welfare of the nation. This class is taking no part in the present government work. To offer a situation to one of them would be to insult him, and to say of one that he expects a government position would mean to discredit him, to compromise his reputation. This class occupies an intermediary position between the corrupt official and the people. Moreover, there is still another element, a new class formed of the leaders of the mass of the people—the peasants and working classes. They have caused the people to organize in thousands of unions and groups. The government fears them and does everything to remove them, arresting and exiling them without a trial. Thus the autocracy is trying to prevent popular energies from taking any new shape.

It is not true to say that we are not prepared, that we are not organized. Our working classes are organized, as was seen by the general strike of October, 1905. You may call it passive resistance if you like, as it was not the strike of a class, but of the nation. Never perhaps in all the world was there seen such a unanimity among such a large body of workers and professionals of all sorts. Further, it is not true that even the army is faithful to the throne. In seventy out of two hundred and eight regiments constituting the regular infantry, political de-

mands were put forward by the soldiers, such as free land for the peasants, general education, liberties, etc. Up to five months ago we had no officers on our side. Now we have the positive statement that in the northern military district alone there are over three hundred officers who have joined our cause, and in the Caucasus over seventy. As to the soldiers, we have a large proportion of the army on our side.

Though you have seen lately a state of comparative quiet in Russia, it is not that the people are pacified, but because we are in a better position to hold our people back. When we are ready, then the signal will be given, and Russia will be freed; and peace and justice will be re-established.

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